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(WASHINGTON, DC) – Congressman Russ Carnahan (MO-03) voted to approve legislation that would reverse a Supreme Court ruling that makes it more difficult for Americans to pursue pay discrimination claims as well a bill to end the discriminatory practice of paying men and women unequally for performing the same job. Both the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act (H.R. 11) and the Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 12) were among the first pieces of legislation to be considered and passed by the 111th Congress.

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, co-sponsored by Congressman Carnahan, would clarify that every paycheck or other compensation resulting from an earlier discriminatory pay decision constitutes a violation of the Civil Rights Act. The piece of legislation passed the House today by a 247 to 171 vote. As long as workers file their charges within 180 days of a discriminatory paycheck, their charges would be considered timely. This was the law prior to the Supreme Court's May 2007 decision.

“This issue is as basic as it gets,” said Congressman Carnahan.

“You should not be paid less because you are a woman. You should not be treated differently because of the color of your skin or your religious beliefs.”

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act would apply to workers who file claims of discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, or disability.

Lilly Ledbetter worked for nearly 20 years at a Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. She sued the company after learning that she was paid less than her male counterparts at the facility, despite having more experience than several of them. A jury found that her employer had unlawfully discriminated against her on the basis of sex.

However, the Supreme Court said that Ledbetter had waited too long to sue for pay discrimination, despite the fact that she filed a charge with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as soon as she received an anonymous note alerting her to pay discrimination.

While Ledbetter filed her charge within 180 days of

receiving discriminatory pay, the court ruled that, since Ledbetter did not raise a claim within 180 days of the employer's decision to pay her less, she could not receive any relief.

Despite claims from critics, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that since the bill would essentially return the law to where it stood before the Supreme Court ruling, the legislation will not lead to an onslaught of costly new litigation.

“At a time when too many workers are seeing their jobs and wages slashed, we’ve got to make sure that all Americans are paid fairly for their hard work,” said Congressman Carnahan. **“The new Congress and I are committed to rebuilding our economy and strengthening our middle class. This legislation is a critical start.”**

By a 256 to 163 vote, the House also passed the Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 12), introduced by U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and co-sponsored by Carnahan, a bill that will strengthen the Equal Pay Act and close loopholes that have allowed many

employers to avoid responsibility for discriminatory pay.

Although the wage gap between men and women has narrowed since the passage of the landmark Equal Pay Act in 1963, gender-based wage discrimination remains a significant problem for women in the workforce. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, women only make 78 cents for every dollar earned by a man. The Institute of Women's Policy Research concluded that this wage disparity will cost a woman anywhere from \$400,000 to \$2 million in lost wages over her lifetime.